(b) and (c) Indian agriculture sector has an impressive record of foodgrains production. However, during the 10th Five Year Plan (2002--07) agriculture sector could register an average growth rate of 2.5% against the target of 4%. Government is aware of the importance of agriculture sector in the overall economic development and w'ell being of the farmers. A number of steps have been taken to rejuvenate the agriculture sector to facilitate inclusive growth. Based on the Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers submitted by the National Commission on Farmers, Government of India has approved the National Policy for Farmers 2007, which, inter-alia, aims to improve economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of the farmers. Various recommendations made by the Commission for rejuvenation of agriculture and allied sectors, as accepted by the Government, have been incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers. These include, inter alia, asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies for improving productivity in a sustainable manner; agricultural bio-security system; supply of good quality seeds and disease-free planting material; issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers, and integrated nutrient and pest management system etc.

In addition, for revitalization of agriculture sector, Government has launched two new Schemes namely, National Food Security Mission to improve production and productivity of foodgrains and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana with an objective to incentivise the states so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sector, to provide flexibility and autonomy to states in the process of planning and executing agriculture and allied sector schemes and to maximize returns to farmers in agriculture and allied sector. Besides, a number of initiatives, plan schemes and programmes including the initiatives/programmes announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers and for development of agriculture sector.

Per hectare productivity of cotton

1570. SHRJMATIJAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

the present level of productivity of cotton per hectare and how does it compare with other cotton producing countries;

whether there has been any increase in the productivity as a result of recommendations; if any, made by the task force appointed in mid-nineties; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRIKANTILAL BHURIA): (a) As per information available on FAO's internet site 'faostat' productivity of cotton in India was 400 Kg./ha as against 1243 kg./ha in China, 1007Kg./ha in Egypt and 805Kg./ha USA in the year 2006.

(b) and (c) Since launch of "Technology Mission on Cotton" in February, 2000 significant achievement has been made in increasing the yield of cotton in the country. The yield per hectare which was at 191 Kg./ha in 2002-03 has increased to 4l6Kg./ha in 2007-08.